



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
FAMILY INDEPENDENCE AGENCY
LANSING



NANNETTE M. BOWLER
DIRECTOR

Detroit Free Press
600 W. Fort Street
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Dear Letters Editor:

A March 10 editorial chided the Family Independence Agency for not having a statewide outreach campaign for the Food Assistance Program. The editorial said, "Only 67 percent of the more than 900,000 people eligible for food stamps were getting them."

According to information published by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service in December 2000, Michigan had the sixth-highest participation rate among the 50 states at 75 percent. The national average for participation was 59 percent in 2000. In October 2002, 774,344 persons received food stamps or 86 percent of the potential 900,000 eligible. During October we issued over \$158 million in food stamp benefits and processed over 48,000 new applications. In addition, Michigan's Food Assistance caseload has increased 42 percent since December 2000.

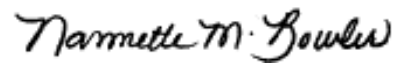
Michigan places among the leading states in reaching its potential customers. The reasons for this are not difficult to understand. Even though the Family Independence Agency does not have a statewide outreach plan, it has many outreach sources. Here are some of them:

- The agency has an outreach plan for senior citizens that may qualify for Food Assistance.
- The FIA recently advised all Michigan Food Assistance households of new legal immigrant eligibility rules.
- A project of Saginaw's Center for Civil Justice worked with Michigan food banks and MSU Extension outreach efforts to prospective Food Assistance families.
- Over the past few years, numerous Family Independence Agency county offices provided outreach efforts using outstationed staff persons and/or worked with community agencies on Food Assistance outreach.

In the current economic environment – with the state budget prospectively being reduced by \$1.7 billion next fiscal year – this is an unlikely time for any state agency to begin planning a

new statewide program, regardless of its merit. The Family Independence Agency will continue to serve Michigan citizens and work with community agencies to ensure families are aware of and receive the benefits to which they are qualified.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nannette M. Bowler". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name being the most prominent.

Nannette M. Bowler